



CHANGE THE WORLD, START WITH ENERGY STAR®

Event Booth Conversation Starters and Frequently Asked Questions

Conversation Starters

If you're using the [ENERGY STAR Event Booth](#), you'll find that visitors are interested in having a conversation about products and practices featured on the booth panels. The following document provides conversation starters for you and your team to engage with visitors of all ages. Remember, no matter what the conversation starter, lead with a smile, which lets visitors know you are ready and able to have a conversation.

- **Q. Have you seen/heard of ENERGY STAR before?**
You'll find most visitors have either seen or heard of ENERGY STAR prior to visiting your event. This question allows you and the visitor to find a common product or practice reference point and then build the conversation. A great follow-up question or comment: "That's great that you've seen the ENERGY STAR on [insert product mentioned by visitor]—did you know that EPA qualifies products as ENERGY STAR in over 60 different categories, as well as commercial & industrial buildings and new and renovated homes?"
- **Q. Do you have any questions?**
A simple but very effective opening, this question bridges the gap between you and a visitor and allows them to start with whatever question is top-of-mind.
- **Q. Do you have any ENERGY STAR qualified products at home?**
This question allows the visitor to point to a specific ENERGY STAR qualified product they already have at home. This conversation starter allows you to demonstrate the cost saving and environmental benefits of a specific product to the visitor in a tangible way that they may not have recognized before visiting your event. Feel free to customize this question to reflect whatever booth panel(s) you may be using. For example, if you are using the kitchen booth panel you could ask, "Do you have any ENERGY STAR qualified appliances at home?"
- **Q. How do you save energy at home?**
Similar to the above question, this conversation starter allows a visitor to go into more detail about some changes they've already started to make. This is also a good question to use if visitors mention they are renters or that they can't afford to purchase anything at the moment. Some energy efficiency practices we can all do include: turning off lights, washing laundry in cold water, taking shorter showers, plugging electronics or small appliances into power strips and turning the power strip off, enabling power management settings on computers or laptops, properly programming the thermostat, replacing air filters every 3 months, adding weather stripping to seal air leaks around doors or windows, etc. Get visitors thinking!
 - Note that if people seem apprehensive at first, you can mention that "It's a pledge to yourself to make one or more simple changes at home to save energy."



- **Q. Would you like a copy of [insert name of collateral material]?**
Some visitors prefer to walk around on their own and not talk to event staff. In these scenarios, think about using ENERGY STAR brochures, activity books, or giveaways as a way to break the ice. While it may not get the conversation started, the visitor will leave your event with information about your programs or saving energy that they can read later. Check out the [Giveaways and Premiums Idea Sheet](#) to learn more about attracting attention to your event through giveaways, collateral, and premiums.
- **Engage visitors with the hand crank or watt meters**
Use interactive elements with the booth, such as the hand crank or watt meters—you'll find them to be powerful learning tools. For example, two watt meters plugged into two different products side-by-side, such as an ENERGY STAR qualified holiday light string and a traditional incandescent light string, illustrate a remarkable difference in kilowatts used. Also, the hand crank can be used to power an ENERGY STAR qualified compact fluorescent light (CFL) versus an incandescent light bulb, helping visitors of all ages understand the concept of energy efficiency. When explaining this to children, let them pretend they're a power plant powering up light bulbs. Ask them what the difference in power usage means and why using less energy is important.
- **Don't forget about the kids!**
Kids are ready to have conversations, too! Often, if kids are engaged, adults will listen and ask questions of their own. A fun way to get kids involved is to engage them in a "scavenger hunt" using the event booth panels. Ask them to help you find energy-efficient products on the panel—the conversation will grow from there. Some other kid-friendly questions include:
 - What does your family do at home to save energy?
 - What are some other things you can do at home to save energy?
 - Why do you think it's important to save energy?
 - Have you seen or heard of ENERGY STAR before?
 - Have you learned anything at school about energy efficiency?

For more conversation points about saving energy with ENERGY STAR, be sure to read the [Key Messages](#) document in the event toolkit.

Frequently Asked Questions

Some people have concerns about saving energy. You might hear these questions at an event. Below are some helpful responses to help you and your staff prepare:

- **Q. I would use CFLs, but I heard they have mercury in them. Is that true?**
Compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) contain a very small amount of mercury sealed within the glass tubing—an average of 4 milligrams per light bulb. No mercury is released when the bulbs are intact or in use. By comparison, CFLs contain about 1/125th of the mercury that older thermometers contain. Also, coal-burning power plants are the single largest source of human-caused mercury emissions in the United States, contributing to 51 percent of all emissions. Because CFLs use 75 percent less energy than the incandescent bulbs they replace, they help to reduce net mercury emissions by requiring less coal to be burned at these plants. EPA recommends that consumers take advantage of available local recycling options for CFLs. Consumers can contact their local municipal solid waste agency directly, or go to www.epa.gov/bulbrecycling to identify local recycling options. Visit www.energystar.gov/mercury for more information.

- **Q. Don't products with the ENERGY STAR cost more than other models?**

It's important to remember that each product purchase has two price tags: The cost to purchase and the cost to operate. When you purchase an ENERGY STAR qualified product, it uses less energy, so it costs less to operate. If products that have earned the ENERGY STAR cost more than a conventional, less-efficient counterpart, purchasers will recover their investment in increased energy efficiency through utility bill savings, within a reasonable period of time.

- **How do I take advantage of these tax rebates I keep hearing about?**

Several incentive programs are currently in place for ENERGY STAR qualified products, many of which vary by state. Visit the [ENERGY STAR FAQ resource](#) for more information on tax credits. [Note: If you can connect a laptop to the Internet at your booth, this is a helpful website to bookmark and access when you get tax rebate questions.]